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John H. French

In Memoriam.

JOHN HOMER FRENCH, LL. D.

Born July 7, 1824.

Died December 23, 1888.

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TO

HIS FORMER PUPILS,

INSPIRED BY HIS CHARACTER, DIRECTED BY HIS SCHOLARSHIP, AND NOW LIVING
HONORABLE LIVES IN NEARLY EVERY STATE; TO THE OFFICERS AND TEACHERS
OF THE COUNTRY WITH WHOM HE SHARED HEALTHFUL LABOR
AND ENJOYED DELIGHTFUL ASSOCIATION FOR NEARLY
HALF A CENTURY, AND PARTICULARLY TO THE
STATE SUPERINTENDENT, INSTITUTE CONDUCTORS AND OTHER OFFICERS, COWORKERS
AND FRIENDS IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK, IN WHOSE HEROIC EFFORTS FOR
THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION IN HIS NATIVE STATE, HE WAS
SO MUCH ENGAGED DURING HIS LATER YEARS, THIS
TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF

Dr. John Homer French.

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY HIS DEVOTED COMPANION OF TWO SCORE YEARS.

MARY ELIZABETH WASHBURN FRENCH.

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In Memoriam.

John Homer French.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE INSTITUTE FACULTY.

At a meeting of the State Board of Conductors of Teachers' Institutes, held in Albany, N. Y., January 12, 1889, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, On the 23d day of December last, death removed from this Board its senior member and chairman, John H. French, LL. D.; and

WHEREAS, We, his associates, desire to make public recognition of the high esteem in which he was held, therefore

Resolved, That in the death of Dr. French the educational interests of the State of New York have lost a prominent worker, whose pure Christian character, ripe culture, varied experience, and sturdy, aggressive manhood especially fitted him for his particular field of labor, and whose instrumentality in improving the work of our common schools can hardly be over-estimated.

Resolved, That we mourn the loss to us of his mature judgment, his wise counsel, and his kindly sympathy in our common work.

Resolved, That we extend to his widow and relatives our heartfelt sympathy in this the hour of their sad bereavement, and that, so far as possible, we would temper their grief by the assurance that, although he has passed the boundary of this life, his work remains, a living force of the progress of education and of mankind.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to Mrs. French, and also one to each of the educational papers of the State.

HENRY R. SANFORD,
CHARLES T. BARNES,
ISAAC H. STOUT,
SAMUEL H. ALBRO.

RESOLUTION OF THE NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS AND SUPERINTENDENTS.

At the thirty-fourth annual meeting of the New York State Association of School Commissioners and Superintendents, held at New York in January, 1889, Dr. E. H. Cook offered the following resolution which was unanimously adopted :

Resolved, That this association desires to put on record its sense of loss in the death of Dr. John H. French, known in almost every county of the State as a conductor of teachers' institutes. We revere him as a man of high purpose, of self-denying devotion to duty, of loyalty to principles and to friends. A great man has gone and we shall not soon forget the lessons he taught or the example he set.

FROM ANDREW S. DRAPER.

My acquaintance with Dr. John H. French extended over a period of less than three years, during which I was occupying the position of State Superintendent of Public Instruction and he was the senior member of the corps of Institute Conductors in the employ of the State Department. The time was sufficiently long, and our official relationship sufficiently close to enable me to know him thoroughly, to admire him greatly and to respect him highly.

My brief tribute to his memory must reveal his character as it was unfolded to me.

He did not attract at first sight. There was little that was magnetic about him. He was never effusive. He used few unnecessary words. It was a month after I came to be his superior officer before I ever saw him or had a word from him. From words which had reached me indirectly I was not prepossessed in his favor,—not that reflections had been cast upon him, but rumors of his unbending nature led to the apprehension that association would not be cordial. When therefore we first met, at a conference between the Superintendent and the Institute Conductors, I was prepared to see a man who had considerable self-satisfaction, who was strong willed and independent, and I was not disappointed.

He was all this; but it was his chief glory, for he possessed the qualities which justified it.

His moral character was without blemish. There were no skeletons in his closet. The joints in his harness

were few and close. Self-confident in his integrity of character, he had no fear.

Next to this, perhaps, his most conspicuous characteristic was the broadness and accuracy of his scholarship. It is but faint praise to say that he knew many things and knew them very thoroughly. He had a thoroughly trained and disciplined mind. It absorbed a great deal of material and it worked up its material with thoroughness and completeness. His mind had confidence in itself. It knew its own value and its capacity for accurate work. Dr. French never lacked opinions and he stood by his opinions tenaciously and in a way which carried conviction to others.

Dr. French was strong as an Institute Conductor. His clean-cut scholarship, his readiness of opinion, his confidence in himself were object lessons of the highest value to teachers. He never failed to interest, but he did much more. He started investigation and aroused discussion. He said things which remained and endured. The teachers of this State will, as long as they live, recall with pleasure the matters which Dr. French presented at their institutes. They will remember what he said and the manner in which he said it. They will tell how it impressed them and how much it influenced their work and their lives. At the time, some of them felt that he was arrogant and dictatorial. But he dignified the institute work, he helped and strengthened the teaching force, he accomplished results.

He was a disciplinarian. He never compromised. He would not divide with the indifferent or the disorderly.

He would have nothing short of absolute and entire attention. He knew that he deserved it and he would have what belonged to him. He was affable and polite about it, but so decided that every one knew what was expected and that there was no alternative but compliance. In an extreme case, after twice speaking of thoughtless whispering in an institute, he stopped speaking, walked down the middle aisle, required two full-grown female teachers to rise from their seats, escorted them to the door and sent them into the street amid silence as profound and impressive as though a public execution were in progress. It may be said that this was severe. Perhaps it was. There are occasions when nothing short of severity is right. That was one of them.

In the council chamber Dr. French was wise and discreet, stimulating and helpful. He was affable and genial as well. He could tell a story splendidly. He could enjoy one with relish. He had his full share of wit and humor, but it was accompanied with sense enough to know when it might be displayed or gratified with propriety. On the whole, however, he took life rather seriously. He felt deeply, he acted decisively in the council chamber as on the platform. He stood for aggressive measures. He knew the value of organization. He understood the importance of clearness of statement. He appreciated courage. He was intent upon accomplishing what was undertaken. He was bent upon reaching the end.

Probably no man in the State was more disappointed,—and the number was not small,—than Dr. French when

the present writer was elected State Superintendent. But he lived to forgive him for it. While no one would see the weaknesses and crudities which were inevitably associated with the first months of the new administration more quickly than he, so no one would give credit for energy and a good purpose more readily than he. The early and decided move for protecting the avenues to the teaching service delighted him, for he knew it meant a fight and he liked a fight for the right. His experience and good judgment, his zeal, his strong nature were most potent factors in promoting the final consummation of the undertaking. It is not enough to say that he was deeply interested in all the measures of the new administration. He proposed and aided the development and permanent success of those measures as but few other men had the strength, the inclination and the opportunity to do. And he became interested in the Superintendent as well as in his measures, for in the midst of his last, most painful and distressing illness, he once persisted in getting out of his house and seeing a member of the Legislature to make sure that there was no doubt of a second term of the same administration. He died before his ardent wish in that direction was gratified, but with the knowledge that it was practically assured.

John H. French was a ripe scholar, a strong leader, a courtly gentleman, a warm friend. His strongest scholarly inclination was toward mathematics and it influenced his life. That life was accurate, true, uncompromising and sure. All of his methods were characterized by mathematical exactness. He was cautious as to what he

undertook, but once enlisted in a cause he never faltered or hesitated or doubted. He never catered to the unthinking, nor bowed his head even to the ground swell of public opinion. He stood his ground like a valiant knight and bided his time. In the realm of trained intellectual power he was not only *like* a valiant knight, he *was* one. He was not only valiant but kindly hearted as well. His last years were full of active and heavy work in the cause he loved so well, but they were full of affliction, of sorrow and of suffering which ripened and mellowed his great strong character for immortality.

ALBANY, *March* 8, 1892.

EXTRACT FROM SUPERINTENDENT DRAPER'S ANNUAL
REPORT, 1889.

Although the work of the year has gone along smoothly and satisfactorily, a shadow has fallen upon it which has saddened all who knew the late Dr. John H. French, the senior member of the corps of institute conductors. In May last, just as he had fully equipped himself by diligent preparation to take charge of the subject of free-hand drawing, Dr. French was obliged to leave his work, so auspiciously begun, by reason of a sickness from which he never recovered. Although his ambition led him to make repeated attempts to go forward with his work in this direction, he was unable to pursue it, except under painful disadvantages. He never lost his interest, and from a sick bed maintained a keen

oversight of what was being done. While himself a great sufferer, he was called upon in September to mourn the death of an only daughter, well known as an accomplished student and educator. This affliction hastened his death, which took place at Rochester, on December twenty-third last. His funeral was held at Syracuse, December twenty-sixth, and was an occasion for drawing together many prominent educators, who realized that they had lost a friend, and the State a valuable servant in education. Dr. French was a man of liberal culture and of vigorous intellectual strength. His life was largely spent in active educational work, and as an author and educator he has left deep traces of his usefulness which will long endure. He was thoroughly well known throughout the State, and in other States, as an accomplished instructor, and as a man of high moral character. He will long be remembered by the many friends he made, by faithful public service and an unblemished private life.

FROM CHARLES R. SKINNER.

Long before my personal acquaintance with Dr. French began, I knew him through the reputation he had gained from his excellent series of maps of the State of New York, and by his later mathematical text-books. Afterward I came to know of his institute work, in which he was one of the pioneers. In 1886, soon after I became Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, my

personal acquaintance began,—an acquaintance which ripened into friendship, and which continued until his death. Others, who knew him longer and better in his busy educational work, will tell the story of his simple active life. I shall simply aim to give some of my impressions of his character as it was my privilege to read it, and to include a few facts concerning him, which may not elsewhere be given.

It did not need a long acquaintance with Dr. French to convince one that he was a man of force and power—a deep, accurate thinker, and a methodical, careful worker. These characteristics were written upon his clean-cut features. They could be read in his eyes and verified by the work of his hands. He did not fawn or flatter to secure favor. The honors which came to him, came because he deserved them. He seemed to know this, though he never expressed it. There was a quiet dignity about him, which might at first be misconstrued into indifference, but this vanished on acquaintance, and the full, bright sunlight of sympathy and good fellowship shone forth, brightening and cheering all whom it touched.

The wide acquaintance gained through his long and valuable service in the institute work, and his experience in many other educational positions, gave him a ready fund of information, which he could always present in a most interesting and entertaining manner, and made him a fully equipped authority on educational questions. His mathematical work made him an exact man, and in all his writings this characteristic was strikingly predomi-

nant. He could almost detect a typographical error in a piece of work with his eyes closed. To his mind a printer could never make a perfect printed page, unless every letter and punctuation mark was in its place. He never slighted any thing, he never spared criticism until there was no further criticism to make.

All in all, my memories of Dr. French, as they are retained in pleasant impressions, recall him as a fine specimen of well-developed manhood—a dignified, courteous and cultivated gentleman; warm and hearty in his friendships, which he made with discrimination; practical, earnest and thorough in his work; cool and undemonstrative, yet with a quiet vein of humor which brightened his intercourse with men; and patient through all his sufferings of mind and body. These qualities seem to me to go far in the making of a perfect man, and are worthy of emulation in all who survive him.

A letter from Mrs. French gives the following facts which will be of interest :

“My husband conducted teachers’ institutes in this State under Superintendent Victor M. Rice, and I think he did institute work under all Superintendents who have succeeded Mr. Rice. I have before me a letter from Rev. S. C. Brown, Commissioner of Schools in Ontario county in 1850, requesting my husband’s services in his institute to be held at West Bloomfield, beginning October 7, 1850.

“In February, 1858, Dr. French was elected a corresponding member of the ‘Albany Institute,’ Hon. J. V. L. Pruyn, president.

“In October, 1859, he was elected a corresponding

member of 'The New York Historical Society,' Hon. Luther Bradish, president.

He was a member of the 'American Association for the Advancement of Science' for many years.

"As no public mention has been made of his religious preferences, I will say that he was confirmed in the Episcopal church by Bishop Williams, of Connecticut, in April, 1853, and was always a devoted churchman."

ALBANY, N. Y., *March* 30, 1892.

FROM PROF. HENRY R. SANFORD.

A good way to gain the mental discipline necessary to a successful life is by a course in college; but this is not the only way. Dr. French had not the advantages of such a course, but by close and self-imposed application to study, he acquired a thorough education of his naturally strong mental powers, which enabled him to win success in all the varied fields which he entered. He was at different times district school teacher, singing school teacher, union school principal, superintendent of city schools, professor in State normal school, inventor, civil engineer, secretary State board of education, author, principal of State normal school, and State conductor of teachers' institutes.

He was often considered a specialist in mathematics, and in this he certainly excelled, but he had a good knowledge also of the various departments of an English education.

His readiness to recognize improvements when con-

vinced that they were such, was shown by his course in regard to form study and drawing. He had been a very successful teacher of drawing for many years, yet after a very thorough investigation he inaugurated a revolution in the methods of teaching drawing in the State of New York, but he was eminently conservative in that he looked with no favor upon schemes and so-called methods whose only recommendation was novelty. In education as elsewhere shams have become popular for a time, but Dr. French was quick to discern their true character. Though intolerant of mere pretenders, he was ever on the alert for some improvement,—a better way. Hence he was an inventor whose patents covered quite a number of useful articles and devices, though, as is frequently the case, they brought to the inventor little or no pecuniary reward.

As an author of works in mathematics, he was remarkably original, accurate, and successful in making text-books which were mathematically correct, and well adapted to class work. The problems were made with wonderful care, and were truthful statements of business transactions. He was unsparing in his corrections of errors made by his assistants, but they were expected to be just as severe in criticising his work. He did a large amount of work in preparing the Robinson series of mathematical text-books, having prepared almost exclusively some of them. In one of the algebras he presented a new demonstration of the binomial theorem, for years known by his name. His last and crowning text-book was the academic arithmetic finished just before his

death, which for completeness and accuracy will long be a standard.

As secretary of the State Board of Education of Vermont, he did much to mould and improve the school system of that State.

One of the greatest of his earlier works was the survey of the State and the making of a map and gazetteer of the State, which is still prized for its accuracy. Though many thousand copies were sold, the cost was so enormous that it proved a financial loss. It is, however, a monument to his energy and ability as a civil engineer.

As the chairman of the State Board of Examiners which under the direction of State Superintendent Draper framed the present system of State uniform examinations, his ripened experience, keen perception and sound judgment were clearly seen. In criticising questions presented by the different members, his frequent remark was, "Remember, no one has any friends here."

But as a conductor of teachers' institutes his influence was, perhaps, more felt than in any other one field. Here, for a long period of years, he was brought into personal contact with the masses of the teaching force in every county in which institutes were held, and in many other States of the Union. He was one of the first to give institute instruction, and he continued with great efficiency, even after fatal disease had been fastened upon him. Fortunate, indeed, were the teachers who were privileged to listen, year after year, to the words of instruction from him who, in almost every phase

of educational work, had fully tested principles and methods.

He was a close observer, and in consequence his estimate of persons was seldom in error. Though not demonstrative in manner he was strongly attached to his personal friends, and in doing them a personal favor he took great pleasure.

The duties of a conductor of teachers' institutes kept him away from his family a very large part of the time during his last years, yet his devotion to his wife and daughter was a marked feature of his life. For them he labored and sacrificed personal comfort with the utmost cheerfulness, and when his daughter, Clara, had achieved unusual literary success at Smith College, at Cornell University and at Oxford, had proven her ability as a teacher at the New Paltz Normal School, and had but just commenced her duties as a professor at Wellesley, her sudden death came to him, already weakened by disease, with a crushing blow. His work was soon finished, and after a few weeks of suffering he passed away. He was carried to the tomb in Oakwood cemetery, in Syracuse, by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and his late associates of the State Institute Faculty.

Dr. French had led a pure life, supported by an unflinching trust in Christ in whose faith he died. "They may forget the singer, but they will not forget the song." The coming generations of teachers of the Empire State will not have known Dr. French personally,—some of them may not know him even by name, but the example

of his spotless life, and the impress upon the schools, of his great service for the cause of sound education will long be the common heritage of the teachers of the State.

PENN YAN, N. Y., *March* 10, 1892.

FROM C. T. BARNES.

Dr. French possessed many of the personal elements which combine to form a strong and valuable human character — one calculated to be of service to mankind. He had the courage of his convictions and never waited to find out what some one else thought, before daring to express those convictions.

When he believed he had discovered a truth, he never apologized for so believing, but put it fearlessly forth as true to the best of his knowledge and belief. This made him at times seem dogmatic, and occasionally aroused fierce opposition on the part of those who knew little of the man. Uniformly, however, the sincerity of his convictions won for him great respect from all who knew him. Few men were less content to accept conclusions hastily and without having weighed the evidence carefully and deliberately. Having once made up his mind as to the truth in any question at issue, he was firm as the everlasting hills in maintaining his belief in that truth. This firmness, in a less cultured man, would have been pronounced downright obstinacy; but what would have seemed to be such in many men, came to be considered in him loyalty to his convictions. He had such an intense

hatred of either pretended knowledge or mere superficiality, that he sometimes seemed to be unkind as well as unjust in his judgments as to those with whom he came in contact. His own habit of thorough investigation tended to make him impatient of those who either jump at conclusions or pretend to wisdom.

Yet no one could be kinder or more considerate toward those who were honest in their beliefs, though mistaken in their conclusions. He had in a marked degree the strength that comes from conscious knowledge. After taking into consideration the evidence for and against, and becoming satisfied he had the truth, few could excel him in the calm, strong and dignified presentation of his conclusions, and fewer still could so inspire an audience with respect for the speaker and his statements.

Dr. French was a *convincing* public speaker, as he was always careful to make sure of his grounds before making his statements. He had a strong and dignified personality, including a fine personal presence; a vigorous, well-stored mind; refined and cultivated tastes. While he was not an omnivorous reader of general literature, he had read much and well in certain lines, and was especially strong in geographical and mathematical studies. His knowledge of the geography of New York State was simply marvelous.

He had great administrative ability, amply shown in his work as teacher and superintendent; as principal of Normal schools; and as superintendent of a neighboring State system of schools. Few men could equal him in the intelligent mastery of detail, and in the untiring energy through which he brought order out of confusion.

Dr. French was a gentleman by birth, instincts and training, and he daily practised many of the common courtesies which go so far to please and encourage others. Unless very much heated in debate or by some factious opposition, he would never interrupt another person in conversation, always observing that rule of common politeness, that only one should talk at a time.

He had great personal dignity, and seldom failed to impress his audience by the strength of his personality.

The polished weapon of bitter sarcasm was at his command, yet he rarely ever indulged in it. Occasionally he would let slip a sentence or two which would cut like a knife.

He understood perfectly well, however, the danger to the user of irony, and seldom resorted to its use.

He had some infirmities of temper, which would occasionally lead him to severe and sometimes unwarranted criticism of others, yet the instincts of the gentleman would invariably triumph after a moment's thought, and, by kind and considerate treatment, he would endeavor to atone for his unkind utterances. He has frequently been known to say savage things to another, and within ten minutes thereafter make a gentlemanly apology.

Dr. French had a commanding presence, and in his prime possessed great physical strength. He had what *seemed*, at least, fine physical health up to within a few years prior to his death. After a very severe sickness which came upon him, he never fully recovered his health, but, while he was fairly well the greater part of the time, his powers of endurance were broken, and, as a result of

this, his last two or three years were years of rapid physical decay. This was especially sad, as his was a life of ceaseless effort. He had prepared himself so thoroughly in the matter of Form Study and Drawing, and was so enthusiastic in his presentation of those subjects before institutes, that, when the poor, broken down body failed to do its work, the sympathies of all were enlisted.

Cleanliness was closely akin to godliness with Dr. French. Always strictly neat and tidy in person and apparel, he seemed to escape the contagion of dirt, and to delight in neatness. He was particular in his personal habits, including not only his person and dress, but in his surroundings.

He had a clean mind, and shrank from conversation or story which either stated in full, or merely suggested, evil of any kind. More than this, he was a religious man. His was hardly an enthusiastic religious nature, but a strong, quiet spirit pervaded his entire life. His was an unassuming piety. He had a sound, well-developed character. He was a manly man, an indefatigable worker, a loyal friend, a wise counsellor, an excellent instructor, a Christian gentleman, and the world is better for his having lived in it. He builded wisely for time and for eternity.

SAUQUOIT, N. Y., *June 1, 1891.*

FROM PROF. ISAAC H. STOUT.

Men live in history and in the memory of their fellow-men as types of their preponderating characteristics,

whether these be good or bad, and fortunate is the man who leaves as a legacy the remembrance of his sterling integrity, pure morals, broad charity and humble faith. Such is our remembrance of the late Dr. John H. French, a man of broad acquaintance, but of that retiring habit which tends to the formation of comparatively few close friendships, the very limitation of number strengthening and intensifying the bonds that linked him to a favored few. His high sense of honor, his integrity of purpose and of action, his unflinching loyalty to authority, to friends and to principles are pleasant memories to those who knew him best, and incentives to better living and higher purpose. Though possessed of a hasty temper, aggravated during the later years of his life by physical weakness, it was so nicely balanced by a keen sense of justice and right, that he was ever prompt to acknowledge an error, while the frank and manly way in which the acknowledgment was made, was a delight to his friends.

Dr. French was a man of action, intent on accomplishing results, and as such was best known to the public. The vast amount of labor he performed both as teacher and author is evidence of his untiring industry. With indomitable will he forced himself to tasks beyond his strength, pursuing his work through a long period of physical exhaustion, excruciating pain, and deep sorrow, to the very end of life, unable to rest with work unfinished.

As an author he was conservative in statement, anxious to reduce theory to practical application, exhaustive in treatment and research to an extent that sometimes

made him fretful with the limitations placed upon him by publishers. A close critic, he gave his most unsparing criticism to his own work, and was never happier than when called upon to defend some statement or definition. Positive and aggressive in argument, he had the highest regard for the individual who was able and ready to defend theories antagonistic to his own, and while fighting strenuously for his own opinions, would surrender to convincing argument in a most manly way.

He was best and most favorably known to the teachers of the Empire State as a conductor of institutes, and his work in this line has done much to improve school work in efficiency and to inspire a desire for higher aims and better results. His presentation of the work was methodical, his statement clear, his analysis careful and logical, enabling teachers to make the work largely their own and valuable in their schoolroom practice. A strict disciplinarian and impatient with idlers and insubordination in an institute, he was kind and helpful to the attentive and inquiring, and by them is held in grateful remembrance. His influence upon educational thought and work is both inspiring and elevating, and in the fullness of time will more and more grow to the perfect measure that it was his ambition to attain.

We cherish the memory of his kind deeds, his earnest efforts in behalf of the pure and true, his busy life spent in the service of his race, and his abiding trust in God. "Though dead, he liveth."

GENEVA, N. Y., *March* 12, 1892.

FROM JAMES RUSSELL PARSONS, JR.

During the first year of my term of office, as school commissioner for the first district of Rensselaer county, at a teachers' institute held at Rome, N. Y., I made the acquaintance of the Hon. John H. French, LL. D.

I was, at the time, the youngest school commissioner in the State, anxious to do good work, but with very little idea as to how this work was to be done. I had often heard of Dr. French as one of the most prominent men engaged in educational work in the United States, and considered myself fortunate in having been able to secure his services for our teachers' institute in October, 1885. Careful attention to his instruction of the teachers at Rome, and several hours' private conversation convinced me that I had met the man whose genius, experience and solid common sense would prove invaluable to me in my work.

In this I was not mistaken. Up to the expiration of my term of office, the suggestions of Dr. French, the instruction given by him at our institutes, did much to elevate the standard of education in Rensselaer county.

I do not mean to assert that the Doctor's influence in this county began or terminated with the period of my active service in school work. In fact, it was largely upon the recommendations of my predecessor and experienced teachers that I sought his appointment at our institute in October, 1885. In this tribute to Dr. French, however, I mean to confine myself to his life and work during the period of our acquaintance. Without consideration of

his whole career as teacher, author, inventor, geographer, mathematician, musician, secretary of the Vermont Board of Education, and institute conductor, Dr. French accomplished enough in the last four years of his life to make his name imperishable in the history of education in this country.

A glance at the reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, from 1886 to 1890, inclusive, shows that, in addition to institute work in other States, literary work of various kinds, reports and recommendations to the State Superintendent, Dr. French conducted seventy teachers' institutes in New York State.

Up to the time of his death, with an experience of forty years, he was considered one of the strongest men ever engaged in institute work in this country. His services were sought by many States. The teachers of Maine, Vermont, New York, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin sat under his instruction. It is safe to assert that no teacher who listened to him will ever forget him. His general information was most remarkable, his personal influence extraordinary.

There are few men in this country who understand better than Dr. French did, the educational systems of the old world. Reading and correspondence had kept him better posted than others, who by actual observation make a special study of these systems of education. We have often talked of the time when teaching in New York as in countries of the old world, would be elevated to the dignity of a profession ; when the qualifications of supervising officers would be definitely fixed by law ; when

compulsory attendance laws would be as strictly enforced here as there; when, under the township system or an equivalent, our schools in rural districts would compare favorably with those in our cities and prosperous villages. He told me these were the principal points we had to learn from the old world, and that, without legislation to insure them, our elementary schools, as a whole, would never bear comparison with the corresponding schools abroad. After more than two years' special study of the school systems of the old world, I am more astonished than ever at the accuracy of the information received from Dr. French before my departure. His detailed knowledge of what I should find was most remarkable.

Dr. French was an exceedingly good judge of character. At Cambridge, Washington county, we heard Judge Draper's first address, as State Superintendent, before a teachers' institute. There had been strong opposition to Mr. Draper from educational men everywhere in the State. These men desired for this office an experienced educator. At the close of the address, Dr. French said to me something to this effect: I believe the Legislature has chosen wisely. His address impressed me deeply. He is a level-headed man, and unquestionably will be a hard worker.—The rapidity with which Mr. Draper has gained a national reputation testifies to Dr. French's ability in the analysis of character.

A short time before his death Dr. French wrote me at Aix-la-Chapelle, Germany, as follows:

"I should be glad to write you something cheerful and interesting of myself, but I can not. For the last seven

months my life has been one of continuous, terrible suffering, and severe affliction. Early in May I broke down from overwork, losing the use of my right hand, which I have not yet recovered. About the first of October my daughter who had just entered upon her duties as instructor in literature at Wellesley College, was attacked with typhoid fever, and died October 6. I was then in very poor health; the journey to Boston by night, the excitement of the circumstances while there, the funeral services in Trinity Church, the return to the burial, also by night, the burial in Oakwood Cemetery, Syracuse, completely crushed me, both in body and mind, and for several weeks after my return it was an uncertain question with good physicians if I would ever recover. On returning here I employed a physician whose diagnosis of my case revealed the true cause of the disease — badly diseased nervous system. Under his treatment I am slowly improving. I seem to have good reason to hope that after a few months of good treatment, I may again enjoy reasonably good health."

I knew the Doctor always looked upon the bright side of things, and yet this letter led me to believe in his recovery. The announcement of his death was a great shock to me. In reading the last of his second series of arithmetics, and his exhaustive paper on Form Study and Drawing, completed under great physical pain, and in deep affliction, one recognizes the same tireless energy, singleness of purpose, and strength of will, which characterized his whole life.

Dr. French was a strong churchman. He was con-

firmed by Bishop Williams of Connecticut. He often talked to me of his early life. No young man could have received a better lesson than that of the story of his perseverance in overcoming the obstacles in his path. I shall never forget the quiet hours spent with him at my home, and at teachers' institutes in different parts of the State. At his death the country lost a most distinguished educator, I, a true and valued friend. I am sure the teachers of New York and other States will always welcome, as I shall, any opportunity of testifying their gratitude for his words of encouragement and kind assistance.

HOOSICK FALLS, N. Y., *July* 12, 1890.

FROM EUGENE BOUTON.

My first annual report as a member of the New York State Institute Faculty, dated December 31, 1884, contained the following acknowledgment :

"It is a source of great satisfaction, in recalling this first year of my experience in this work, that I have to acknowledge so much of courtesy and kindness from those with whom I have been brought in contact. From my first institute work at Clayton, in September, 1883, to the present, I have been treated by the senior members of the Institute Faculty with such generosity and kind consideration as can be expected from those only whose experience and success have placed them beyond the thought of rivalry and left them solicitous only that their associates as well as themselves shall attain the highest possible

excellence." These words were intended to express my appreciation of kindness which had exceeded the requirements of official courtesy. Those to whom I referred as "senior members," were Dr. John H. French, Prof. James Johonnot, and Prof. Francis P. Lantry, who, with myself, constituted the Institute Faculty at that time. Dr. French and Prof. Johonnot had ranked as educational leaders while I was but a child, or even before I was born, and Prof. Lantry was confessedly my superior in experience, as well as in reputation. All of them had treated me as a younger brother whose success was as much to be desired as their own. Now that all of them have been "cut off out of the land of the living," it is natural and seems fitting that whatever it is mine to say of them should be in the direction of grateful appreciation. They rest from their labors, "And their works do follow them." What those labors were and what were their works, the present generation needs not to be told, and I leave it to others to record whatever in this direction may seem useful to generations to come.

The early retirement of Prof. Lantry from the Institute Faculty, and his tragic end, my association in authorship with Prof. Johonnot, and the fact that Miss Clara French taught for a year and a half under my principalship at the New Paltz Normal School, were among the causes which brought it to pass, that my acquaintance and relations with Dr. French and Prof. Johonnot were more intimate and long continued than with Prof. Lantry, yet in so many ways does memory associate these three in recalling my experiences as a member of the Institute Faculty that any

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attempt on my part to pay a just tribute to the memory of Dr. French, would almost seem to be incomplete without some mention of these who were his associates when I was added to their number. Dr. French and Prof. Johnnot had early worked together in the preparation of "French's Map and Gazetteer of the State of New York." In other ways, and together, they had striven earnestly and long to rescue their gifted associate from the fatal influences by which at last his life was wrecked. Thus, however it may seem to others, it is to me but obedience to the wish of him for whom these words are written, that I should here associate with him these two men as they stand associated with him in my own memory. Though it was with Prof. Lantry, at Clayton, that I did my first full week of institute work, it was with Dr. French, at Castleton, in Rensselaer county, in the last week of August, 1883, that my first attempt at institute instruction was made. It was at an evening session, held to make up for the afternoon, which had been devoted to an excursion down the Hudson. I well remember the interest that Dr. French manifested in my work, and the kind approval which he expressed at the close of the exercise. So far as I can recall, my first meeting with him was at that institute, but when the week was over I felt that he was a scholar and an instructor whom I must admire, and a friend whom I could safely trust.

As I think of him, now that he has passed away, it is not easy to say whether I am more impressed with his public labors or his private life. In his regular work as an instructor, as in the conferences of the Institute Faculty

over which he presided, the evident care with which he had considered every essential detail of his work was only equalled by the clearness and precision with which he set forth his conclusions and enforced his views. Every thing of this kind that he undertook gave evidence, not only of careful planning, but of methodical and conscientious elaboration. His manner of instruction was suggestive of the process by which the sculptor brings out the statue from the stone. He almost seemed to chisel out ideas and methods in the presence of his audience, and when he was done, to leave them gazing with satisfaction upon the lifelike images which he had created. While he is doubtless remembered by his listeners as the embodiment of unfailing dignity, and while he never permitted himself or his audience to depart from the strictest decorum in all things, his discourse was seldom wanting in frequent touches of humor or flashes of wit, which seemed as spontaneous as they were effective. Interspersed with these, the carefully-collected details which made his evening lectures so instructive became a delightful recreation. And now that I ask myself wherein his private life was different from his public career, I find it difficult to make any distinction other than that arising from the diminished tension which private life permits. Aside from a part of the rest, which he really needed, and such attention to social duties as propriety required, I doubt if he ever allowed himself to be without employment. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that it was practically impossible for him to be idle. Whether he was planning a book, preparing it for the press, or perfecting the proofs,

studying the possibilities of some invention which he had conceived, pursuing some business project, considering some proposition which promised to better his condition, or occupied with correspondence or matters directly relating to his professional duties, a visit to his room invariably found him busy. It was this incessant activity that enabled him to do so many things, and to do them all so well; for, instead of the maxim, "Not how much, but how well," his life seems to have commended, "How much *and* how well," as a more desirable version.

My acceptance of the principalship of the New Paltz Normal School might naturally have lessened my opportunities of meeting Dr. French, but it so happened that his daughter, Miss Clara French, returned from her studies at Oxford University about the time the Normal school was opened, and was induced to accept an appointment as a member of its Faculty. As a consequence of this, Dr. and Mrs. French were drawn to New Paltz, and my meetings with him were scarcely less frequent than before. How strong and noble and true was this daughter, their only child, only those who knew her, can understand. How terrible was the blow which took her away, none can appreciate save those who have in like manner suffered. For those who mourned her loss, and for those who had not known her, I prepared a brief memoir of her, which was inserted in the *New York School Journal* of November 10, 1888. It is but a meager record of a life worthy of a more complete history, and but a feeble tribute to one whose merits were so great, but as the affliction which called it forth was so great an event in

the life of him in whose memory I am writing, I may perhaps be permitted to introduce it here :

In Memoriam.

CLARA FRENCH.

Died October 6, 1888, Aged 25 years.

Miss Clara French was the daughter of Hon. John H. French, LL. D., the well-known author and member of the Institute Faculty of New York State. She received fine preparatory training, and entered Smith College, graduating in 1884, after a brilliant and promising career as a student. Not content with the culture thus obtained, she spent a year in the study of English literature at Oxford, England, and in European travel. The excellence of her work at the university was shown by fine testimonials from her instructors.

Upon the opening of the Normal school at New Paltz, February, 1886, Miss French accepted a temporary appointment as teacher. It was necessary to assign her work for which she considered herself least fitted. She had no experience save that derived from an incomplete course of practice work in a Normal school of which her father had had charge. But it soon became evident that she was mistress of the situation. When the permanent Faculty was chosen, and she could assume the work for which her studies had specially fitted her, no doubt existed as to her fitness for the place. In her relations to the teachers and to myself, she was pre-eminently loyal and true, always enthusiastic and helpful.

After a year and a half at New Paltz, she entered the graduate department of Cornell University, and placed herself under the special instruction of Professor Corson. Her course here was not less brilliant than it had been

elsewhere, and having won the Shakespeare prize, and, by her writings and in other ways, proved herself singularly gifted, she received the degree of A. M. at the last commencement. An appointment as lecturer on English literature at Wellesley College followed, and she had just entered upon her new duties, when she became ill with typhoid fever, and died in a few days, in Boston. Rev. Phillips Brooks, of Trinity Church, conducted the funeral services, and she was buried at Syracuse, N. Y.

As a teacher, she was an inspiration to her pupils, and her scholarly habits, her womanly dignity, her unfailing kindness, her seemingly inexhaustible energy, and the true nobility of her nature, will strongly influence the lives of all whom she taught. Her pupils and former associates at New Paltz, and the Faculty of Wellesley have expressed their sense of loss by resolutions.

In addition to many short articles, she had, with her classmate, Miss Scudder, of Boston, edited a collection of the poems of George MacDonald, and her future was full of literary promise. The sympathy that is felt for the parents upon whom this crushing blow has fallen is all the more sincere because those from whom it comes are also mourners.

The effect of this crushing blow I do not need to tell. But the following letter from Dr. French, dictated less than a month before his death, is so characteristic of him, and so clearly indicates both the mental and the physical suffering which he was called upon to endure, that it seems to me eminently fitting that it should be reproduced in this place :

62 STATE ST., ROCHESTER, N. Y., }
November 28, 1888. }

MY DEAR DR. BOUTON :

I wish to thank you for the excellent, truthful, and appreciative sketch of the life of our dear Clara, which you so kindly wrote as a labor of love, and published in the New York *School Journal* of November 10.

I am still suffering, as I have been since May 4, from pains resulting from my mental prostration. I have had no use of my right hand since May 18. My physician keeps me in bed nearly all the time. I am not allowed to see company, and, take it all in all, I am leading a very quiet, secluded life. But after more than six months of the most terrible, constant suffering that ever fell to the lot of a human being, under the treatment I am receiving here, I am slowly improving; and I am confidently looking forward to restoration to comfortable health in the near future.

With very kind regards to Mrs. B. and best wishes for your prosperity and success through life, and a final meeting with God's elect, when time shall be no more, I am,

Always your friend,

JOHN H. FRENCH.

Though his hope of restoration to usefulness in this life was vain, we have the consolation that his confidence in the life immortal was not subject to disappointment.

SHERBURNE, N. Y., July 15, 1890.

FROM JAMES H. HOOSE.

I count it a delicate privilege to contribute a few words to the memorial volume that is to be pub-

lished to perpetuate the life and career of Dr. John H. French.

It was my happy fortune to be associated with Dr. French more or less intimately for several years. Our work was in institutes and other educational meetings. The traits of his character that made a permanent impression upon me, were his faith and his hopefulness. His faith was practical and sustaining; it touched his daily labors, and guided him through the round of his duties. He had faith in the cause of education; he had faith in his own purposes; he had faith in his own convictions; he had faith in his own powers. This faith made him hopeful; out of this state of mind grew his cheerfulness. Being firm in faith, he saw into the future, and this future looked pleasant to him. There were times during his life when education needed the support of strong friends; he was always present at the points of danger, advocating progress; his powers were at the service of his cause.

Dr. French had great faith in the value of intelligence; he would disseminate it liberally among the people; but it should be sound learning, not trifling or superficial; he had only contempt for mere sham and pretense. He held that time, energies and opportunities are an inheritance to the youth of a people, and that these legacies should be appreciated by the teachers of the State. He was independent in carrying forward his own work; he knew one thing well — his duty; it was his habit to be at his post, and he was there too often when he should have been on the invalid's couch.

It was a legacy to his generation to see him cheerful,

hopeful, full of faith in his cause, when he was in the bonds of disease in his later life. He walked in the dignity of his years, and in the honor of the integrity of his character. His fortitude under the loss of his daughter was sublime for its strength and tenderness; he did not complain; he instructed others as was his custom; he gave counsels with cheerfulness; but he taught and walked as one whose life was beyond the grave in the company of his beloved child.

CORTLAND, N. Y., *July* 1, 1890.

FROM AMOS M. KELLOGG.

I consider it a fortunate circumstance in my life which brought me in contact with John H. French, LL. D. It is not every overflow of the river that adds to the fertility of the soil on its banks; and the stream of humanity not always leaves permanent impressions on those subject to its currents.

I recall with great distinctness a day in the summer of the year 1888 because a conference with Dr. French left such positive additions to my knowledge of him and of certain points in educational science. While I knew him before as a man eminent in the educational field in various ways, and considered it especially fortunate that the State of New York had secured his services to conduct teachers' institutes, yet I was brought to know him at the time referred to as a man who had sounded depths touched it seemed to me by few.

Dr. French entered the office of the *School Journal* on the forenoon of that day, with a visible earnestness in his demeanor, and after a few preliminary words, stated that he had reached unexpected conclusions on a subject to which he had given very much thought — it was that of Drawing. The teaching of this subject had been confided to him by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for presentation at the teachers' institutes; it was a new departure, it was a movement of importance, and the consideration of it had employed his maturest and best thoughts. His long experience in educational work was one factor, his ability to grapple with the subject as a trained thinker was another; but there was still another — the mode of dealing with educational questions had changed during the ten preceding years; this might roughly be stated under the term of educational progress, but only roughly after all.

As I remember it, the Department of Public Instruction had given him leave of absence that he might make a thorough investigation of the subject. The usual method of teaching Drawing was to place lithographs of more or less complexity before the pupil, which he copied with such fidelity as he was master of. The time had been when the copy produced was looked upon as the results of the work; the time had arrived when the manual and mental training effected was to be the main consideration. Dr. French had received his appointment at this parting of the ways of thought; at the time where the new must segregate itself from the old. He found he must investigate far more than the subject assigned to him,

that the whole field of educational thought must be surveyed.

The conversation that was expected to last but an hour at the most, as was soon apparent would demand considerable time. Then each learned that the other intended to take the same train on the Ontario and Western Railway that afternoon, and on the cars the subject was resumed. I do not pretend to recall the words used ; the general impression, however, is permanent. Looking back over more than forty years during which he had been in the field, he declared that great mistakes had been made in the schoolroom by confusing the knowledge-result with the development-result. He frankly said that within a short time his views had undergone a great change. "When this subject was turned over to me I supposed it would be easily mapped out ; but as I reflected that now all of the institutes would be affected by my decision, I began to look as deeply as I could and I found I had been all wrong."

Then followed a sketch of an entirely new system and the request that any defects or faults should be pointed out. A request like this must be received usually with much caution ; not infrequently the request simply asks for acquiescence. But in the case of this earnest and honest man it meant just what the words meant.

As we swept along and came out on that view of the glorious Hudson at Haverstraw, the current of thought was diverted but for a moment. "Drawing is not to teach a child to appreciate nature, it is to teach him to know and express himself." And thus the talk went on

until we rounded Storm King. He was one who had come upon new views, on deeper and broader thoughts. In considering Drawing he had been led to study education from the standpoint of a long and very successful experience. He referred to his work at various points; it had always given satisfaction, and the remarkable feature that often made its appearance and challenged my attention was that in spite of this satisfaction he had been considering the subject without any reference to that fact. "They (meaning the patrons of schools) are not judges; they take what we give them; we must be right."

At some time in this conversation he alluded to the work I myself had attempted to do in the exposition of educational principles. I have since felt that I remembered this conversation far better for the generous appreciation my efforts received at his hands. His was a mind that heard or read not to contradict or confute, but to weigh and consider. He occupied for a time the part of principal of the training school in the Albany Normal School, one that ten years before I had held. We both had given our best efforts to the great State of New York, he since 1845 and I since 1850. Persons and movements in the State came up for review, but I was impressed with the fact that he looked on his present work as the most important of all. He fully coincided in the suggestion I made, that the work in the institutes must undergo a decided change; and he felt that the proposed plan for teaching Drawing would necessitate other and needed changes. I thought the paper he was to read before the school commissioners in January of the following year was

well conceived, and a necessary part of the new steps to be taken.

I remember I was encouraged to elation by the discussion; the seeds of the new that had been sown amid so much objection were springing up; the entire field of the State would pass out from under the domination of the fixed and mechanical ideas that had ruled so long and firmly. Dr. French was evidently in search of the truth in Drawing; he had given his time and best thought; he felt that he had made genuine discoveries.

The conversation then diverged upon his home and family; he spoke with the utmost affection and pride of his daughter Clara, who was then lecturer on English literature in Wellesley College, if I remember aright. She must have been a person of unusual powers of mind, I felt, and worthy all this loving father was saying of her. I little suspected that in three short months his heart would be wrung by the anguish her death would occasion.

The lamps were lighted in the cars, for evening was approaching; he was aiming at the center of the State and I to climb into the Catskills. We felt that though akin in thought and feeling on the subject that had had such earnest discussion, we were now to part. But the meeting was a valuable one; it had given me strength for many days that were to come. I had been assured by this man that the conclusion I had reached had a just foundation; he had gone out and had surveyed the field from another standpoint. So I parted from my friend, he promising to send me a printed statement and plan that should embody his thoughts. As I look back upon

it, now that three years have sped by, I am certain that John H. French was a man who contributed in the most liberal manner to make the world better.

COTTAGE CITY, *August* 10, 1891.

FROM C. W. BARDEEN.

The first time I met Dr. French was at the Teachers' Institute at Malone in 1882. Of course I knew his history well, and I was very glad to make his acquaintance. We compared notes on the leading educational men of New York and Pennsylvania, and I found his criticism keen and positive, but on the whole kindly and distinctively just. Even where he disapproved of a man as a whole, he was careful to give him credit for any thing that really belonged to him. Perhaps nothing was more characteristic of Dr. French than his respect for facts.

What especially impressed me at that time, however, was that he was a disappointed man. Things had not gone altogether well with him. He had held as high positions as the country offers, but there had been unpleasant experiences connected with them that embittered him. He had been a prolific text-book writer, but the books in which he retained his interest brought him little profit, while those in which he had sold his interest brought other men fortunes. He saw little men succeeding where he had failed, by subterfuges that he would have spurned, and he felt himself as it were laid upon the

shelf, joining the great army of institute-workers that was then made up largely of men unable to get regular work as teachers.

As we met him from time to time, we were glad to see this attitude toward the world softening its lines. Whatever institute work might be in other States, it was respected here, and he was at once recognized as the foremost man in the corps. He made friends who stood by him, and whom he began once more to trust. He had less of selfish interest than most men; or rather let me say he was less limited by selfish interest than most men. On the outside he was quite ready to consider and insist upon his personal rights; but when he became interested in a cause so that belief had become conviction he threw himself into it with an abandon that could not be purchased or paid for. His work on the State map and gazetteer has never had an equal in this country for thoroughness; and the strength of his last year was lavished upon the syllabus of drawing.

It may safely be said of him that his friends accumulated. During his earlier years in institute work here he was not responsive, and teachers could not always tell whether he liked them or not. But as he found himself really and positively liked and trusted by the teachers he met, his heart gradually warmed toward them, and in his later years there were a multitude who clasped his hand with a fervor that was warmly returned.

It was well for him and well for us that he came here as an institute conductor. We believed in him, and that gave him growing gratification after a good deal of dis-

appointment; and he gave to the teachers of the State the intellectual power and experience of one of the most broad-minded, clear-headed, and upright men who ever stood before a teachers' institute.

SYRACUSE, *September 24*, 1891.

FROM EMERSON W. KEYES.

My acquaintance with Dr. French was more friendly than intimate; hence, I have doubts whether I can contribute any thing of real value to the contemplated Memorial volume. I wish I might. I esteemed him highly, both on personal grounds, and on the ground of his educational work. The latter was quiet, unostentatious, nothing for show, every thing for results.

If I were to characterize his work in one word, which would to me express its real significance, more than any other, it would be — CONSCIENTIOUSNESS. I think I never knew any one whose work was more imbued with *conscience*, than was that of Dr. French. But it was never a *morbid*, — always an *intelligent* conscience. But it was *conscience* nevertheless. He could not conscientiously do, approve or tolerate *wrong*. His control and direction of institutes was in accord with this idea. It was the secret of his success; it was this which gave power and efficiency to his work. Of course this implies rare qualities of an intellectual order. But of these, others will speak. I only wish to emphasize the one phase of his nature which to me seemed to dominate all others.

BROOKLYN, *August 11*, 1890.

FROM C. R. ABBOT.

I knew Dr. John H. French as my disinterested friend. He did me many favors — not of a material sort, but no less genuine, real and acceptable.

From my first acquaintance with him, I was deeply impressed with his superior solidity and strength of character. I knew his work and much of his habit of thinking and doing.

As a friend, I always found him sympathetic and ready to listen to the details of any matter that I wished to lay before him for his inspection and counsel.

His views and opinions in such cases always seemed to be stated after a thorough understanding of the subject under consideration, and his expression appeared to be dictated by an earnestness surprising in one whose own welfare was not to be affected by his decision. His sympathetic nature at once comprehended the feelings of his friend, and his unbiased honesty and keen perception eminently fitted him for a safe and wise counsellor. The variety of his attainments gave him soundness of judgment and readiness of action in deciding and executing any purpose.

He made no display of his knowledge or abilities, but in any case where his counsel was needed, he was never found wanting.

His views on educational subjects were in advance of many of his associates, and his opinions were formed after most thorough investigation and painstaking consideration.

His humility and unobtrusiveness often kept him from claiming a position in the educational field which he was

abundantly competent to fill. Such men are not self-seekers.

He has passed away and left a work dear to him, but he has left a legacy in the results of his labors and influence that ought to be had in remembrance. I am refreshed after the contemplation of the life, character and works of gentle, genial, affectionate, true, and noble Dr. John H. French.

BROOKLYN, *July* 5, 1890.

FROM M. H. BUCKHAM.

My acquaintance with Dr. French in his official capacity extended over the four years of his secretaryship of the State Board of Education, from 1870 to 1874, during all of which time I was a member of the board. For a part of this time Dr. French was also superintendent of the schools of the city of Burlington, and I was associated with him as one of the school commissioners. During his entire residence in Burlington, Dr. French was my next-door neighbor, and I knew him intimately.

The circumstances attending Dr. French's coming into the State were somewhat unfavorable, and were never wholly overcome. The two preceding secretaries of the board had been Vermont men, graduates of its schools and colleges, and thoroughly acquainted with the people and public school system of the State, and had succeeded in making themselves and their educational work highly popular. Dr. French had been known to the educational

public only through occasional institute work in the State, in the course of which, however, he had established a high reputation for executive ability, and for a comprehensive knowledge of the more recent methods of school administration. When it became necessary to elect a new secretary, it appeared to the members of the Board of Education that these were the qualities most needed for the office, and that Dr. French had them in a greater degree than any other candidate, and they accordingly elected him. The leading educators of the State, some of whom had been Dr. French's competitors, gave him their hearty support, but the people were inclined to regard him as an outsider, imported to do the work which a native, in thorough sympathy with the people of the State, could have done to better advantage.

In spite of this drawback, Dr. French's administration was a successful one, honorable to himself and serviceable to the cause of education in the State. The public school system of the State was never so well organized, its operations and details never held so well in hand, as during Dr. French's secretaryship. Indeed, it may be safely said that never before or since has public education in Vermont been in so prosperous, or at least so promising a condition, as during the last two years of Dr. French's administration. In every department of the school system, in the improvement of school buildings and school apparatus, in the readjustment of school districts, in more thorough registration, more effective supervision, and especially in the raising of the standard of the qualifications for teaching, Dr. French's vigor and enthusiasm

made themselves felt in every town and school district. It was during this period especially that the graded school system, the most important educational improvement of this half-century, made most rapid progress in Vermont.

But this most promising condition of things received from the Legislature a setback, from which it has never recovered. The true history of the abolition of the State Board of Education, in 1874, is yet to be written, and is known to but few of the people of Vermont. It was in the main a reaction against changes in the public school system. It was the protest of the rural districts against the direction which educational progress was taking, against union districts, graded schools, the town system, State supervision, and consolidation in general. It was the same popular instinct which still resists the substitution of the town for district administration, and which at the last session of the Legislature overthrew the system of county instead of town supervision, which had been established at the preceding session. But the movement in 1874 was largely engineered by text-book publishers. The law establishing uniform text-books made it the duty of the Board of Education to select books for a period of five years. Certain disappointed publishing firms, making invidious use of the fact that Dr. French's *Arithmetics* were among the books selected, and appealing to the old prejudice against him as an outsider, stirred up such feeling in the Legislature that they abolished the Board of Education and set back the progress of popular education in Vermont for a whole generation.

No one felt this disaster more keenly than Dr. French.

It is quite unnecessary to say that none of the charges then brought against him were true; that his book was adopted by the board solely on its merits, upon the recommendation of the leading teachers of the State, and without any urgency on his part; and that throughout this painful episode in the history of the State, Dr. French was solicitous only for the good of the cause to which he had devoted himself. Having become a citizen of Vermont, he strove in all good faith to identify himself with her interests, and was in hearty sympathy with all efforts to advance the welfare of her institutions and her people.

Dr. French's administration of the public school system of Burlington was conspicuously able and successful. Here where he had no prejudices to overcome and no rivals to encounter, his rare administrative experience and energy found an inviting field. Sustained by a board of school commissioners who had confidence in his leadership and were ready to coöperate with him in vigorous measures for the improvement of the city schools, he entered with characteristic ardor into the enterprise and succeeded in doing a work for the schools of the city which will long keep his name in the grateful remembrance of the people of Burlington.

As a neighbor and friend, Dr. French was genial, warm-hearted and thoughtfully kind. A slight brusqueness of manner gave to some an impression of haughtiness, and possibly had something to do with his unpopularity in certain quarters. But this mannerism was nothing more than the promptness of an energetic man who was too busy to be leisurely polite. Those who knew him well

would testify that a kinder-hearted man could rarely be found. He was a communicant in the Episcopal Church, and though unostentatious in matters of religion, was a sincere and exemplary Christian.

BURLINGTON, Vt., *October 1*, 1891.

FROM JOSEPH DANA BARTLEY.

During eight years Dr. French was a resident of the city of Burlington. Here he had a delightful home on the summit of the hill, near the University, commanding views of Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks on the west, and the picturesque valley of the Winooski and the Green mountains on the east.

For five years, from 1870 to 1875, he was the efficient secretary of the Vermont Board of Education. In this office and that of superintendent of the Burlington schools he left an impress that time will not efface.

His reports show a clear conception of the needs of the common schools of Vermont, and the means to be used to accomplish what he desired for them. The results show the soundness of his principles and the wisdom of his methods. He was an early and earnest advocate of the town versus the district system, and was actively and heartily interested in other judicious reforms, but, as is generally the case with the rural schools throughout New England and elsewhere, the conditions were such as to prevent his reaching the full ideal of his plans and hopes.

In the "Queen City" of Vermont, however, he found a field for his educational efforts such as few places afford. This favored city, in the past, has received the impress of such men as Presidents Marsh, Pease, Wheeler and Angell, and in the present it enjoys the influence of President Buckham with his strong University Faculty, and that of such eminent citizens as Senator Edmunds, Hon. E. J. Phelps, Rev. Dr. L. G. Ware, Dr. J. H. Worcester and many others of literary taste and culture.

As superintendent of the Burlington schools, Dr. French had the cordial support of a few choice spirits who knew the requisites for a good educational system, and gave their best efforts to secure it. Among these it is sufficient to mention the names of President Buckham, Henry Loomis, Charles J. Alger, Rev. Dr. Ware and Luther L. Lawrence. With the aid of such men of liberal views and definite aims, Dr. French made the schools of Burlington eminent among those of our country. Other cities have more costly buildings, and more elaborate facilities for variety of educational work, but in none is better work done in what is attempted, from primary grades to high school, than in Burlington.

The tasteful High School building, embowered in trees, in one of the loveliest and choicest locations in the city, surrounded by beautiful homes, was a part of the work of Dr. French, and if he had no other monument of his long and useful professional life, the schools of Burlington would be a worthy one.

A part of his policy was to secure only the best teachers from the best sources. This is evidenced by the fact

that among these teachers have been graduates of Williams and Vassar Colleges, the University of Vermont, the High Schools of Burlington and Syracuse, N. Y., Abbot Academy, Andover, Mass., and the Normal Schools of Geneseo and Oswego, N. Y., and of those at Castleton, Randolph and Johnson, Vt.

Dr. French was endowed with marked natural gifts and had great attainments. An indefatigable worker, he made his life one of eminent usefulness. Clear, definite and deliberate in his teaching, he laid wise plans, and was not easily diverted from them. What the natives of India used to say of Sir Henry Lawrence may not be inapplicable to him: "When Sir Henry looked up twice to heaven and once down to earth, and stroked his beard, he knew what to do." Noticeable were his industry, moral earnestness, mental vigor and versatility. He excelled as mathematician, author, teacher, supervisor, musician and inventor. It is not strange that he made strong and abiding impression upon all who came under his influence. Many a one with Vermont's best educational interests at heart, deeply regretted that he was allowed to be drawn to the wider fields of the Keystone and Empire States.

I can not close without mention of the hospitable home and the delightful family of Dr French. His gifted daughter was indeed a worthy child of such a parent. Inheriting his strong character and scholarly tastes, after a most thorough training at the University of Vermont, at Smith College, at Oxford, England, and at Cornell, she had just entered upon a most hopeful career as instructor

of literature at Wellesley College, when she was so suddenly snatched away by the ruthless hand of death. It was no wonder that this sad event hastened the death of her father.

My personal memories of the long-continued and uniform kindness and courtesy experienced at the hands of Dr. and Mrs. French are abiding, and are connected with most delightful associations with the lovely city once their home and mine.

BRIDGEPORT, CONN., *March 7, 1891.*

FROM N. C. SCHAEFFER.

In my study hang the pictures of three distinguished men whom it was my privilege to know in their ripest years. One is that of Dr. John W. Nevin, for many years President of Franklin and Marshall College, who is considered by competent judges to have been the profoundest philosophic theologian of America, and whose Christological views exerted a moulding influence upon the theological thought of this century. Another is that of Dr. I. A. Dorner, for many years one of the shining lights of the University of Berlin, whose book on the person of Christ made him famous and influential wherever the science of Christian doctrine is studied. The third is that of Dr. John H. French who, in his sphere, exerted an influence no less potent and far-reaching.

A circumstance associated his name in my youthful mind with that of Sir Isaac Newton. An algebra, which

fell into my hands, gave, in connection with the Binomial Theorem, also French's theorem for finding the coefficients of any power of a binomial. Afterward, when Dr. French himself became the author of a mathematical series issued by another firm, his name and Newton's were dropped by the publishers of said algebra—an act that called down upon their heads the maledictions of more than one school boy.

The few years of his life that Dr. French gave to educational work in the Keystone State, marked an epoch in many of our schools. Under the magic touch of his organizing hand two of our State Normal schools moved beyond the years of struggle and started upon a career of solid growth and prosperity. Not indeed is this to be attributed to him alone, for a great school never comes to be through the efforts of one man; but his work and influence must be regarded as one of the potent factors that started these schools on a career of success and efficiency far surpassing the most ardent expectations of their most sanguine friends.

He reached the masses of our people not merely through the teachers he trained at these Normal schools, but, more especially, through the lectures he delivered at the county institutes. The County Institute in Pennsylvania brings together not only the teachers, but also the directors and the friends of education generally. He frequently spoke in crowded houses and always with telling effect. He held his audiences, not by brilliant flashes of rhetoric, nor by studied sallies of wit and humor, still less by advocating plausible though impracticable theories

that excite high hopes without issuing in growth or knowledge, but rather by sensible discussions on methods of teaching and school management, by carefully-prepared discourses on the philosophy of mind and its culture, and by interesting lectures on scientific themes like the wonders in an egg-shell. He never spoke to the teachers as if they were a set of fools who had done every thing wrong they ever did in the schoolroom; but he always presumed on their part a fair share of brains and intelligence, talking to them as a friend who had come to give them things new and old out of the rich treasures of a long and successful experience.

He taught many of us, for instance, how to add and how to teach addition. Young men who had gone through college and passed creditable examinations in the higher mathematics, including Calculus, could not in many cases add a column of figures with accuracy and facility. The device for securing a knowledge of all the possible combinations of numbers up to one hundred, he claimed, originated with him, and it certainly secures the desired end wherever it is faithfully followed. Starting with number in the concrete, he never left the impression that thinking in figures was an accomplishment to be despised or neglected. Although he laid great stress upon the practical, he was never satisfied until he had led the pupil to think in the symbols that stand for ideas in the realm of the abstract and the general. Where his methods of teaching number are faithfully followed, no one ever hears of lamentations over failures in the results of the work done by the teachers and pupils. His theories of

instruction in other branches were equally feasible and helpful.

Straws often indicate the direction of the wind. Little things often indicate the currents of feeling in men's lives. A plain Pennsylvania teacher wrote to Dr. French somewhat as follows: "A boy came to our house. And his name is John." After the lapse of some weeks a napkin-ring and drinking goblet came with the last sentence as an inscription. Another teacher found a specimen of the genus *Limax*, and not having previously seen any thing like it, he took it to Dr. French, who, though very busy with other work at the time, nevertheless dropped his pen, examined the specimen, gave its correct name, indicated where others of the same kind could be found, and then directed the young man to the books containing exhaustive information. How many acts of kindness like these he did to the young teachers of our land will never be known until the hidden things of life are brought to light in the world to come.

In recent years several efforts were made to bring him back to Pennsylvania. It was all in vain. New York knows and appreciates her best educators, and no inducements that we could offer were enough of a temptation to make him quit work in his native State. He lived among us long enough to make us revere and cherish his memory. In his death we mourn the loss of a kind friend, a faithful teacher, a skilful lecturer, a wise educator, a successful author, and above all *a good man*.

KUTZTOWN, PA., *June 1, 1891.*

FROM J. H. YOUNG.

Though closely connected in teaching with Dr. French for three years, I am not in possession of such knowledge of his character, or of such special facts of his history, as to entitle me to an extended space. And while it is a labor of love to furnish a few reminiscences, it is fitting to give greater opportunity to his older and better informed associates.

Dr. French was principal of the Normal School of Indiana, Pa., from September, 1878, till July, 1881, completing three school years.

From May, 1875 — the time of the school's opening — till 1878, there had been two principals. The first, a Doctor of Divinity, both learned and able; but better suited for a college, the pulpit or a rostrum, than a Normal school. The other was more a specialist and teacher of a branch, than a leader and controller of others. Dr. French, on the other hand, impressed me directly as the man we needed, experienced, capable and of the public schools. This impression was confirmed by acquaintance.

At the time of his arrival, he appeared to be in the full vigor of his mental and physical prime; about fifty-five years of age, and, like Ulysses, powerfully proportioned, though of medium height.

His visage was of the clear-cut, intellectual type, an admirable combination of the practical and the studious; a keen eye, prominent nose, massive forehead, decisive mouth, and shaggy eyebrows; a face unmistakably betokening great executive ability. The usual cast of his

features was inclined to be stern, but capable of entire transformation by the sunshine of his smile.

These outward lineaments were true indices of his inner man. Though boasting no college career, his literary attainments were great—greater, perhaps, on that account. Indeed, many of his best traits were suggestive of the self-made man. His earnestness and power of self-impression, his disregard for many of the trifling “ologies” of the schools, balanced by a sincere reverence for the unattempted “classics,” together with his miscellaneous acquirements—all were indicative of the omnivorous mind, grasping at every thing within reach, till later experience counseled retrenchment and concentration.

That concentration, as is well known, took the form of public school and institute work, and the science of number.

During my three years association with him, I had frequent opportunity to witness the exercise of these triple functions; and the estimate was generally favorable. His school work was a model of simplicity, effectiveness and resource. His institute instruction was replete with useful hints, wisdom and experience.

Of his mathematical genius his published volumes are in full evidence. But outside his mastery of his professional subjects, he had amassed a large fund of correlative knowledge; and he appeared to be a living cyclopædia of school lore, law and organization.

As shown by what he accomplished, Dr. French was a very busy man. During his incumbency at Indiana, he was simultaneously engaged in the conduct of the school,

and of many institutes, hearing classes, delivering lectures, writing books, and personally attending to many commercial transactions. The successful management of so many divergent interests argued him a man not only of general grasp, but of special business acumen and sagacity.

To a mind of such natural capacity he added the auxiliaries of industry, good habits and order. He was systematic in every thing,—in his punctuality, his beautiful script, his orderly belongings, his arrangement of topics, his outlines of subjects, his precision of statement, and his excellent discipline.

That Dr. French was a man of integrity and morality was obvious to all having dealings with him ; but that he was a religious man, and a true Christian, was known only to his friends and intimates. He made no parade of his private sentiments, political or religious, as was fitting his position, but he was a man of pronounced views of both.

I hope it is not amiss, in this connection, to recur for a moment to his family relations, as I knew them. In these he was specially happy. In his only child, a daughter, he had a refined reflection of his own mentality. Her early attainments, in all maiden modesty, were as notable as her early death was deplorable, just at the entrance on a presumably brilliant career of letters. Of his surviving consort delicacy forbids an expression of her beautiful character ; but it speaks volumes for a disposition that made friends and sunshine wherever its possessor went.

A closing remark. What the effect of Dr. French's unimpeded energy might have been, would be interesting to inquire.

It was his misfortune, unwittingly, to become the principal of an institution full of discordant elements and favoritism; enough to diminish seriously, if not to neutralize, the usefulness of any man.

An inferior man, endowed with finesse and combativeness, might have acted differently; but Dr. French was not one to sacrifice his abilities and reputation for position; nor was he of such a temperament as to tamely endure insubordination or crookedness. He did the most fitting thing—he resigned. And this tells the story in full, of his short sojourn in Indiana. But it is gratifying to recall, that his sterling value was both appreciated and acknowledged; and his resignation was deeply regretted by all true friends of the institution.

INDIANA, PA., *June 1*, 1890.

FROM L. H. DURLING.

The pen of him who writes of the dead has need to be guided by a thorough knowledge of its subject, and inspired by a sympathy and sagacity which is capable of estimating, at its true value, the character, and deeds which are but the concrete appearance of the reality which dwelt within and which was the man himself. I am sure that my own pen is far from being adequate to the task of painting the likeness, or of properly recording the deeds of him in whose memory I am asked to write; but I shall gladly contribute my mite, as many pleasant associations cluster around my recollections of him whom I was glad to call my friend, Dr. John H. French.

My acquaintance with the Doctor extended through a number of years, and, oftentimes, in institute work we were thrown together as co-laborers for a period of several days.

Here he was thoroughly at home. Respecting and loving the work in which he was engaged, his earnest and forcible presentation of thought won for him many friends and served to impress all with the importance of the work of the public schools, and of the sacred character of that which had been intrusted to the teacher in these schools.

In all our intercourse I found him to be a genial, whole-souled friend. He was a Christian gentleman of that robust type so rarely met with and so highly prized when found.

He was a close observer, an earnest student, and an indefatigable worker to the close of his life. Heartily in sympathy with all that is best in what is sometimes termed "The New Education," he consecrated his life to its advancement. Familiar with what had been written upon the subject of "Methods," and "The Philosophy of Education," he constructed a plan of his own, which was at once both progressive and conservative.

As a teacher, he proved the correctness of his theory, by a successful practice, while, as an institute instructor and a Normal school principal, he has given abundant cause to hundreds of the rising teachers of New York and Pennsylvania for holding him in grateful remembrance as they recall his able and untiring labors in their behalf, thus, not only giving them a clearer insight into the true character of the mission in which they were en-

gaged, but also breathing into them a strong determination to do their very best in the noble work which they had undertaken.

He was a man of keen intellect ; a clear thinker, always proceeding logically in unfolding his subject.

His mind was eminently analytic in its procedure. He was never content with surface indications or with results obtained by means of superficial rules, however correct they might be, but always pushed onward, deep into the intricacies of his subject, bringing out and using in his thought-work those hidden principles which escape the attention of the ordinary thinker.

His mind was naturally inclined to mathematics, in which line of work he was especially proficient. These subjects he taught with marked ability, while, as an author, his text-books bear ample evidence of scholarly attainment, and of an intimate acquaintance, not only with the subject-matter, but with the workings of the human mind as well. As the author of books for the young, he took into consideration not only the nature of the subject he would unfold, but, also, that of the mind which was to struggle with its difficulties, a point which is often overlooked by authors otherwise well-fitted for their task.

Possessed of a strong will, the Doctor was noted for great firmness and decision of character ; he was an ardent lover of order, and a strict disciplinarian. So intense a lover of order could not tolerate disorder in any one in any manner accountable to him ; hence at times, his discipline seemed severe, but it was the severity which was the

natural resultant of an inflexible purpose to maintain the right.

He was a skillful organizer so that under his guidance chaos was rapidly transformed into order, and every one concerned soon came to understand that a master-hand was at the helm. As a teacher of teachers he devoted a great degree of attention to this point, believing it to be an essential of all true success; and without doubt, scores of teachers are to-day using the programs and schedules which he so carefully prepared for them and urged upon their attention. He thus furnished them either the pattern after which their own schools were fashioned, or, what was still better, the germinal thoughts which, unfolded and developed in their brains, grew into what was adapted to their powers and their surroundings.

Another prominent characteristic showing itself everywhere was accuracy; an exactness extending to the minutest details of his work. A friend said of him: "Dr. French never penned a careless line." Accurate in his own work, he demanded accuracy in the work of others, and was unwilling to accept any thing less; a trait which it were well could it be inwrought into the texture of every life.

A strong point in the worth of the Doctor as an educator, was the nobility of his character. He felt the importance of that in which he was engaged, and the dignity of his profession, and, everywhere, his life was its living exponent.

To come into the presence of such a man and to sit at his feet as a learner, was, in itself, an inspiration.

After all, this is the key to the highest type of success. Theory is good, but practice is far better, and the result of our teaching can never be above the level of our lives.

The inspiration that comes from the touch of a noble life is worth far more to the learner than any other that can be brought to bear upon his life.

Dignified and courteous, a warm friend among friends, doing much and demanding much; severe, it may be at times, and yet with a heart of tenderness; a leader among his associates, with his face always to the front, and his foot stepping ever to the music of progress and the right, as he saw it, such was he everywhere and at all times.

As an educator, and as an author, he has made his mark upon the century, and although he has passed into the great unknown, and ceased to mingle with mortals, still he will long live in the improved methods, and in the higher type of teaching, which in no small degree are due to his earnest and long-continued labors.

Although from the nature of his work he was compelled to be absent from his home much of the time, still he was ardently attached to his family. His love was deep and abiding, leading him to consider no sacrifice too great which contributed to their comfort and success.

The death of his daughter was a fatal blow, and he survived her but a few short weeks; but we trust that he lost her here only to find her in a higher realm, and amid more beautiful surroundings, and that with her he fondly awaits the reconstruction of his family circle — so ruth-

lessly shattered here — in that land where joys can never die, and where sorrow can never enter.

Thus, one by one, earth's treasures leave us, leave us for the other shore.

BALTIMORE, *September 29, 1890.*

FROM THE SCHOOL BULLETIN.

January, 1890.

We are glad to be able to present to our readers the first portrait of Dr. French ever printed. It is from a photograph furnished by his brother, and is a strong likeness of Dr. French as we used to know him, before disease had laid her unyielding hand upon him. The sketch that follows is from notes prepared for us by his brother and sisters. It is the story of a remarkable life, and will be cherished by many of the thousands who read it as the memorial of a valued friend.

Dr. French was born in Batavia, N. Y., July 7, 1824. While he was a child, his father was killed in Wisconsin, the announcement coming on a folded sheet of paper on which the postage was twenty-four cents. There was no property left, but the mother was a good manager and made notable school-teachers of all her four children. Most of his education he got in common schools, working for farmers in the summer, and going to the district school in the winter. When he was fourteen he was prostrated by sunstroke, and the farmer he worked for, thinking him dead, had him laid under a tree while the

other men went on with the work. He recovered but was never able afterward to withstand heat. The first ten cents he ever earned was spent for a Webster's spelling book. While still a boy he was observed to study Webster's dictionary attentively. When asked why, he replied that he was going to read it through, and then he should be a very learned person.

At sixteen he spent a winter in the Cary Collegiate Institute. He and three other boys occupied one room, boarding themselves and cutting their own firewood. Their entire outlay, excluding the provisions brought from home, was fifty-nine cents a week each. Some of this time his eyes were so weak that he had to learn his lessons from hearing them read by his chums.

He afterward spent one or two terms at the Clarence Academy, Erie county; and the following winter, at the age of seventeen, he taught his first school, in the town of Alabama. He afterward taught in Pembroke, in Stafford, and in Seneca Castle.

At this place, he began, at twenty-one, his work as a mathematical author, undertaking the revision of Adams's Arithmetic. Subsequently he taught a year in the Geneva Lyceum, and a year in the Phelps union school.

From here he went to Keene, N. H., where Dr. Adams lived, and there completed the revision of Adams's Arithmetic. He also wrote Adams's Mental Arithmetic, Mensuration and Bookkeeping, all of which were entirely his own work, but formed a part of Adams's series.

He then became principal of the high school at Clyde, N. Y., and remained there three years. For the three

years following he was principal of the academy at Newtown, Ct. In 1851 he prepared a set of arithmetical charts which were published in Rochester and had quite a large sale.

Now began his great map publishing work. First he undertook town and city maps from actual surveys, beginning with Waterloo, N. Y., and continuing with Geneva, Seneca Falls, Jordan, Penn Yan, Ovid, Oswego, Auburn, Albion, Niagara Falls, and others. In 1856, in connection with Robert P. Smith, of Philadelphia, he undertook a map of the State of New York from actual surveys, showing every county, town, village and city boundary: every road, stream and lake, and the general topography of the country. This was accompanied by a State Gazetteer giving history and statistics, the two being sold for \$10.

All the work, except the engraving and printing, was done under the direction of Dr. French. A large corps of assistants was employed, among whom were Dr. Franklin B. Hough, the well-known statistician; James Johonnot, late institute conductor; and Jay Gould, who made the survey of Ulster county on a salary of \$75 a month.

It was estimated that to do all the work would have taken one person 125 years. It was completed in four years, but at an outlay so great that although more than \$300,000 was received for the sale of the map the undertaking proved a financial loss.

During this time, Dr. French was assisting in the revision of Robinson's series of mathematics, of which at

one time he owned one-third the copyright. The algebras were mostly his work, and his demonstration of the binomial theorem was for a long time printed as "French's." It was a somewhat sore point with him that after he had sold his copyright this designation of what was peculiarly his own work was dropped.

From 1856 to 1867 he lived in Syracuse, and after the completion of the State map he gave his time to institute work, and to the preparation of the series of arithmetics published by the Harpers which bore his name. In 1865 he was made superintendent of the city schools of Syracuse, resigning after a few months to become principal of the experimental department of the State Normal school at Albany. While here he invented and manufactured a patent ruled slate with drawing cards, and a series of writing-books with marginal drawings, one of the copies reading, "*Any child that can learn to write can learn to draw.*" This shows that twenty years ago he had recognized the importance of that branch of study to which at so much personal sacrifice he gave the last weeks of his life. About this time "French's Arithmetics" were published.

In 1870, he was elected Secretary of the Board of Education in the State of Vermont, where he remained for five years, being for two years city superintendent in Burlington. From 1875 to 1878 his time was given to his arithmetics and to institute work.

In 1878 he was made principal of the State Normal school at Indiana, Pa., where he remained three years. Here he overworked, and was obliged to resign his

position through typhoid fever, which entirely altered his appearance, reducing the stout figure which had seemed almost corpulent, till even his friends had to look a second time to recognize him.

When he had recovered his health (so far as it ever came back to him), he was appointed upon the corps of institute instructors in the State of New York, of which he was at his death the senior member. In fact he was the oldest institute conductor in the country, having been employed more or less in that capacity during every one of the last forty years. There is hardly a rural public-school teacher in this State who has not sat under his instruction, and he has done much work in Maine, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Wisconsin. The degree of LL. D. was conferred upon him by the University of Iowa in 1860.

To complete the circle of his accomplishment, it should be stated, in his early life he used to teach singing-school, and he was fond of playing the violin. While at Phelps he organized and conducted a Philharmonic Society.

He was also an extensive inventor and patentee, his designs including a folding school-desk, a folding globe, a device for protecting cars from dust, and several household articles, besides the cards and writing-books already mentioned. Many of these patents had value, but he never seemed to care to realize from them. When they were finished and ready for sale he turned to something else. Indeed, financially, Dr. French's life was unsuccessful. He saw other men made wealthy by his ideas, while he seemed always to sell what he should have kept,

and to keep what he did not derive advantage from, so that he died in only moderate circumstances.

He married in Phelps, at the age of twenty-three, Mary E., daughter of the late Israel Washburn, who had been his life-long companion, and who survives him. Two children were born to them,— Mary Louise, who died in Syracuse in 1862, aged three years; and Clara, who died October 6, 1888, in Boston, aged twenty-five, and just on the threshold of a career that promised remarkable brilliancy. It was this last sudden death that put the final push to the burdens by which Dr. French was already over-weighted.

He completed the last of his second series of arithmetics, Harper's "Advanced Arithmetic," by dictation only a week before his death, while lying upon his bed, too ill to sit up, but with mind still clear and vigorous. Nearly his last work was to complete the paper on drawing which was read at the meeting of the school commissioners held in New York city, January 8, 1889, and, disappointed to find he should be unable to be present, expressed his satisfaction in knowing that the paper would nevertheless be read.

His illness gave him great physical pain, and he was never free for a moment from neuralgia in the arm during the last eight months of his life. Yet he rarely complained, and absolutely refused opiates till the very last. When he had been sleepless for night after night his brother said firmly that he should insist upon injecting morphine. Dr. French submitted, and almost the instant the needle was inserted he murmured, "I — feel — I —

am—going—to—sleep,” and sank into a slumber from which he did not rouse for twelve hours.

FROM THE NEW YORK SCHOOL JOURNAL.

February 2, 1889.

John H. French was born in Batavia, Genesee county, New York, July 7, 1824. He received his education mostly in common schools, working for farmers in the summer as he had opportunity. The first ten cents he ever earned was expended in purchasing Webster's Elementary Spelling-Book. About the age of sixteen he attended the Cary Collegiate Institute at Caryville, Genesee county, for one winter; he and three other boys occupying one room, boarding themselves, and cutting their own firewood. Their outlay, including room rent, besides the provisions brought from home, was fifty-nine cents each per week. A portion of this time his eyes were so weak he was unable to read, and he learned his lessons by having his chum read them aloud to him. This was followed by one or two terms at the Clarence Academy, Clarence, Erie county, and the following winter, at the age of seventeen, he taught his first school in the town of Alabama, Genesee county. After this he taught district schools in Pembroke and Stafford, Genesee county, and Seneca Castle, Ontario county, and here, at the age of twenty-one, he began his mathematical work by beginning the revision of Adams's Arithmetic, at that time the standard arithmetic. Subsequently he taught a

year at the Geneva Lyceum, a boarding and day school for boys, then a year at the Phelps Union School. From there he went to Keene, N. H., where Dr. Adams lived, and completed the revision of Adams's Arithmetic, and also wrote Adams's Mental Arithmetic, Adams's Mensuration, and Adams's Bookkeeping, all of which were entirely his own work, and a part of Adams's Series. Then he went to Clyde, Wayne county, as principal of the Clyde High School for three years; then to Newtown, Conn., as principal of Newtown Academy for three years; then began the publishing of town and city maps from actual surveys. The first one was that of Waterloo, Seneca county, then Geneva, Seneca Falls, Jordan, Penn Yan, Ovid, Oswego, Auburn, Albion, Medina, Niagara Falls, and others. In 1856, in connection with Robert P. Smith of Philadelphia, he began a map of the State of New York from actual survey, showing every county, town, village, and city boundary; every road, railroad, stream, lake, and the general topography of the country. This was accompanied by a *State Gazetteer*, giving general history and statistics, which is to-day a book of reference. All the work but the engraving and printing was done under the immediate supervision of Dr. French. A large corps of assistants were employed, among whom were Dr. Franklin B. Hough, State historian, James Johonnot (late institute conductor), and Jay Gould, who made the survey of Ulster county.

It was estimated that to do all the work from the beginning to its completion would have taken one person one hundred twenty-five years. It was completed in

four years, but the outlay was so great it was not remunerative. During this time he was assisting in the revision of Robinson's Series of Mathematics, of which at one time he owned one-third interest. His home was in Syracuse from 1856 to 1867, and after the completion of the State map, his time was occupied in institute work and upon his own series of arithmetical works. In April, 1865, he was appointed superintendent of schools in Syracuse. He resigned after a few months to accept the position of superintendent of the experimental department of the State Normal School at Albany. While here he invented and manufactured a patent ruled slate with drawing cards, for use in schools, to teach children how to draw; also a series of writing books with marginal drawings, one of the copies being, "Any child who can learn to write can learn to draw," showing that at this time, twenty years ago, he recognized the importance of introducing drawing in public schools as a part of education, and he lived long enough to see the beginning of the fulfilment of his wishes in that direction. About this time he prepared his series of mathematical works of four books, which were published by Harper Bros. In 1870 he was elected Secretary of the State Board of Education of Vermont, which position he held for five years. From 1875 to 1878 his time was given to work on his arithmetics and institute work. In 1878 he was appointed principal of the State Normal School at Indiana, Pa., where he remained three years, making it the best normal school of the State. In consequence of overwork he had a serious illness, and resigned his position. After recover-

ing his health he was appointed institute conductor of the State of New York, which position he occupied until his death. In point of service he was the oldest institute conductor in the United States, having begun work about forty years ago and doing more or less of it each year since. There is hardly a teacher in a public school in the State, that has not sat under his instruction. He has done institute work in Maine, Vermont, New York, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. In his early life he taught singing school, also, and was an accomplished violinist. While teaching in Phelps, he organized and conducted a Philharmonic Society. He married at the age of 23, in Phelps, Miss Mary E. Washburn, daughter of the late Israel Washburn, who has been his life-long companion, help and counselor. Two children were born to them in Syracuse, Mary Louise, who died in 1862 in Syracuse, aged three years, and Clara, who died in Boston, October 6, 1888, aged twenty-five years. The degree of LL. D. was conferred upon him by the University of Iowa in 1860. He completed the last of his second series of arithmetics by dictation, whilst lying upon his bed, too ill to sit up, only a week before his death, his mind being clear and vigorous. Nearly his last work was to dictate a paper on drawing, which he hoped to be able to read at the meeting of school commissioners in New York, January 8, 9, 10, 1889. He expressed great satisfaction at having it completed, saying it would be read if he was not there. He invented and patented several articles: a folding school-desk, a drawing slate with cards, folding globe, etc., etc. He also

discovered what was known as French's Binomial Theorem, which was first published in Robinson's Algebra. From the 4th of May last until his death, he had not one moment's freedom from intense pain, yet he rarely murmured. His last institute work was in Geneva, October 1st to 5th, 1888, going from there to his daughter's death bed in Boston. The week after her burial, October 16, he attended a meeting of teachers of drawing in Buffalo, but was very feeble. This was the last public work he took part in. He was a close student and an indefatigable worker.

FROM THE SYRACUSE JOURNAL.

December 24, 1888.

The death of Dr. John H. French occurred Sunday morning, at the residence of his brother, Dr. Frank French, in Rochester. His health had been poor for some months, and the recent death of a greatly beloved daughter made a serious impression upon him. He was one of the best known educators in the country, and the oldest of institute instructors. Dr. French was born at Batavia, July 7, 1824. He early enlisted in the cause of popular education, and became useful and distinguished in it. He filled many prominent stations during his long career, among them that of Superintendent of the Experimental Department of the State Normal School, at Albany, Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Vermont, and principal of the State Normal School at Indiana, Pa., recognized as one of the foremost institutions of its kind in the country. Dr. French was best known, however, as State conductor of teachers' institutes. In that capacity he was connected with the State Department of Public Instruction for many years, and in point of service was, in fact, the oldest institute conductor in the United States.

His knowledge of the subject nearest his heart led several textbooks, of which he was the author, to be considered to this day works of authority. The last labors of the deceased were to perfect and introduce a system of drawing suitable for the public schools. Dr. French published a number of educational works, and also a map of the State of New York. He formerly, for some years, resided at this city, where he had many close friendships. He looked upon Syracuse as his real home, and he chose Oakwood as the last resting place of himself and his family. His surviving relatives are his widow, his brother, named above, and two sisters, Mrs. H. W. Perkins, of Penn Yan, and Mrs. Dr. Galentine, of Cleveland. Funeral services will be held at St. Paul's Cathedral on Wednesday, at 3 P. M.

FROM THE SYRACUSE JOURNAL.

December 26, 1888.

The funeral of the late Dr. John H. French, one of the oldest and most practical educators in the State, was held at St. Paul's Cathedral this afternoon. A brief service was held at the house in Rochester this morning and the remains were brought here on the 2:20 P. M. train, accompanied by the family and friends. Rev. H. R. Lockwood, S. T. D., officiated at the Cathedral, the music being furnished by the choir of St. Paul's under the direction of Rev. Henry R. Fuller. The pall-bearers were Andrew S. Draper, of Albany, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Henry R. Sanford, of Syracuse, Charles T. Barnes, of Sauquoit, Isaac H. Stout, of Farmer village, State instructors; and J. G. K. Truair and Carroll E. Smith of this city.

Among those present from out of town were Prof. John M. Dolph, of Port Jervis, Prof. Sturdevant, of Onondaga Valley, School Commissioner E. B. Knapp, of Skaneateles, Prof. Taylor, of Canandaigua, Prof. Howe, of Auburn, Dr. James Hall, State Geologist, besides many others.

FROM THE ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE.

December 24, 1888.

Educators throughout the country in common with his many friends and coworkers in Syracuse and this city will learn with painful interest of the death of Dr. John H. French, which occurred yesterday morning at the residence of his brother, Dr. Frank French, on Crescent avenue, Vick Park.

Dr. French's health had been poor for several months past. His daughter Clara died in October last, and after that event he came to his brother's residence, where he had since remained. His condition became worse from day to day, until at last the principal disease, diabetes, assumed such a stage that he was unable to leave his bed for a month before the termination of his sufferings.

Batavia was the birthplace of the deceased and he was born July 7, 1824. Though he did not have the advantage of a college training, natural ability aided by perseverance soon turned the course of his career into the channel in which it was to continue until death ended his labors. Education was his life work, and to it he devoted all his energies. Others soon recognized that his was one of the master minds of the day and he was offered and accepted such offices as Superintendent of the Experimental Department of the State Normal School at Albany, Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Vermont, and principal of the State Normal School at Indiana, Pa., recognized as one of the foremost institutions of its kind in the country. Dr. French was best known, however, as State conductor of teachers' institutes. In that capacity he was connected with the State Board of Education many years, and in point of service was, in fact, the oldest institute conductor in the United States. His knowledge of the subject nearest his heart led several text-books, of which he was the author, to be considered to this day works of authority. The last labors of the deceased were to perfect and introduce a system of drawing suitable for the public schools.

Of the immediate relatives his widow, his brother, named above,

and two sisters, Mrs. H. W. Perkins, of Penn Yan, and Mrs. Dr. Galentine, of Cleveland, survive.

The funeral services will be held at 10:30 o'clock Wednesday morning at his brother's residence; interment Wednesday afternoon at Oakwood cemetery, Syracuse.

FROM THE SYRACUSE STANDARD.

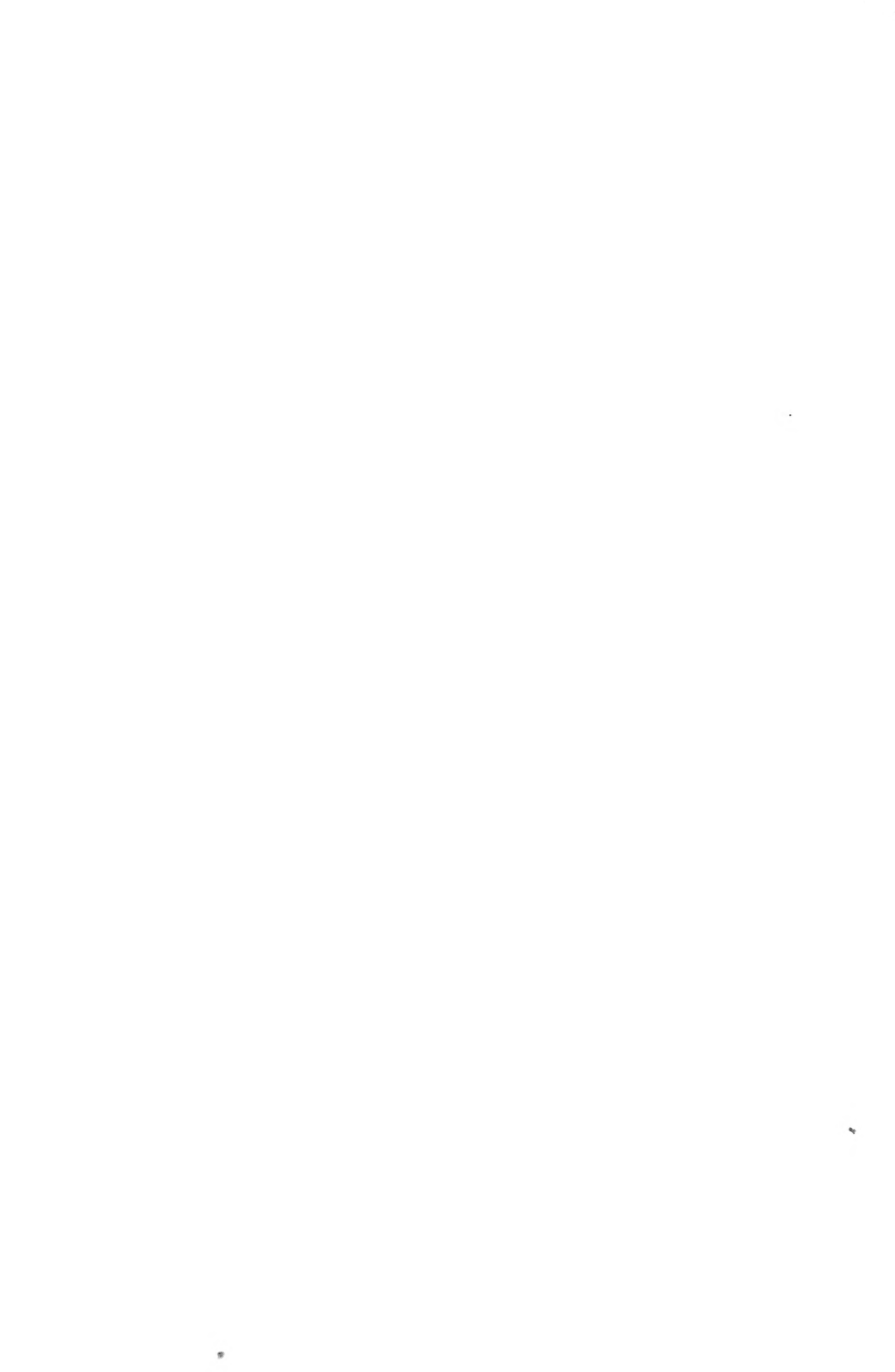
December 27, 1888.

The funeral of Dr. John H. French was held at St. Paul's Cathedral yesterday afternoon. Rev. H. R. Lockwood officiated, and the music was furnished by the surpliced choir under the direction of Henry R. Fuller. Among the floral tributes was a wreath from friends in Rochester, and a pillow of white roses with the inscription "Our Associate," presented by the State Institute faculty. The pall bearers were Andrew S. Draper, of Albany, State Superintendent of Public Instruction; Henry R. Sanford, of this city, Charles T. Barnes, of Sauquoit, and Isaac H. Stout, of Farmer Village, members of the Institute faculty; J. G. K. Truair, and Carroll E. Smith. Among those who were present were Prof. John M. Dolph, of Port Jervis, Prof. Sturdevant, of Onondaga Valley, School Commissioner E. B. Knapp, of Skaneateles, Prof. Taylor, of Canandaigua, Prof. Howe, of Auburn, Dr. James Hall, State Geologist; Dr. E. A. Sheldon, principal of the Oswego Normal School; C. E. Hawkins, State Inspector of Teachers' Classes; Superintendent Edward Smith, of this city; Principals A. E. Kinne and A. B. Blodgett, of this city; C. W. Bardeen, editor of the *School Bulletin*; Academic Principals Farr, of Glens Falls, Fuller, of Batavia, Taylor, of Canandaigua, Clapp, of Fulton, Smith, of Lansingburgh, Scudder, of Rome, Downing, of Palmyra, Rowe, of Auburn, and others.

Although suffering severe pain for seven months, Dr. French continued to work through an amanuensis up to a week before his death. During this time he completed his "New Academic Arithmetic," to be published by the Harpers; a revised copy of his work in drawing, which

he had introduced in the schools throughout the State through the Institute, and an exhaustive paper on the teaching of drawing in the public schools, to be read before the State Association of School Commissioners and Superintendents in New York, on January 8. He was one of the State's oldest and most successful practical educators. Principal J. H. Hoose, of the Normal School at Cortland, telegraphed this to Prof. Sanford, yesterday:

"Educators have lost a warm and intelligent friend in the death of Dr. French. I cannot attend the funeral, but I mourn a personal bereavement in him."



MAR 28 1951

